



### **Improving Equitable Access through Comprehensive Improvement Planning**

“Teachers matter more to student achievement than any other aspect of schooling” (Rand, 2012). Although many other factors contribute to a student's success in school, research confirms what many educators intuitively know: “teachers matter most” (2012). Unfortunately, national data show that many of our most at-risk students – poor and minority students, English Language Learners and students with disabilities – continue to be taught more often than their peers by inexperienced, out-of-field or ineffective teachers. As a result, the United States Department of Education (USDE) required states to develop equity plans and use evidence based strategies to address this issue. [Kentucky's equity plan](#) is focused on teacher preparation; recruitment, hiring and placement of teachers; providing supports for on-going, job-embedded professional learning; and strategies to retain teacher and leaders.

Beginning in the fall of 2015, all districts and schools in Kentucky were required to identify barriers and develop strategies to address issues to achieving equitable access to effective educators for at-risk students. This was completed through the Equitable Access diagnostic embedded within the Comprehensive District and School Improvement (CDIP and CSIP) planning process. For the 2016-17 school year, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) revised the diagnostic to be more streamlined to prompt discussions regarding equity and allow districts and schools to develop goals that address their specific needs. Areas of focus for the revised diagnostic are as follows.

- **Equity Data** – Districts and schools will complete a data chart regarding a variety of data points related to equity. The chart should be completed with the most recent data available. There is also a required data entry point for a self-selected indicator. This is an opportunity to share data that may be unique in telling your district and/or school story. Possible examples include, but are not limited to: advanced degrees, effectiveness data and principal turnover.
- **Equity Data Analysis** – Districts and schools will review and analyze equity data and provide an explanation of the components of the data to tell the district or school story. This explanation should reflect any trends, noteworthy data points or perceptions the data has provided related to equitable access to effective educators.
- **Barriers and Root Causes** – After the data analysis is complete, districts and schools should then identify the barriers (challenges) for some of the identified trends. An identified barrier, for example, could be higher teacher turnover in priority schools as compared with non-priority schools. Once the barriers have been identified, then root causes of why the barriers exist should be included.
- **Goal Setting** – Once the barriers and root causes have been identified, districts and schools will be asked to set three-year goals. These goal are aligned to the current metrics in the equity tab within the District and School Report Card. Goals should be realistic and reflect the needs as they relate to ensuring equitable access. For example, if your school's percentage of first-year teachers is higher than Kentucky's average, you



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may consider a goal related to support and retention. Goals should reflect the individual needs of the district or school.

- **Strategies and Activities** – Once goals have been set, the district and school are required to identify strategies and activities that will assist them in reaching the goals. Strategies and activities should be embedded within the Comprehensive District and School Improvement Plan.

The Equitable Access to Effective Educators diagnostic should be used as a tool for identification of barriers and as a catalyst for development of strategies that will result in the recruitment, development and retention of effective educators. Ensuring that all Kentucky students have access to effective educators will have a positive impact on student achievement, novice reduction, and gap closure.

“Teachers Matter: Understanding Teachers' Impact on Student Achievement.” Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2012. [http://www.rand.org/pubs/corporate\\_pubs/CP693z1-2012-09.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/corporate_pubs/CP693z1-2012-09.html).

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